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Groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

Letter dated 5 October 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the ministerial communiqué adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries at their seventh annual ministerial meeting in New York on 28 September 2007 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 57 (b).

(*Signed*) Ami **Diallo**
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Annex to the letter dated 5 October 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Communiqué of the seventh Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries

New York, 28 September 2007

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of landlocked developing countries, having met in New York, on 28 September 2007 in the sidelines of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

Expressing the concern that landlocked developing countries continue to be marginalized from international trade, thus preventing them from reaping the benefits of globalization and using trade as an instrument for achieving their development objectives, due to their lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, dependence on transit services and policies of their transit neighbours coupled with inadequate transit transport infrastructure facilities and cumbersome transit and border-crossing procedures,

Recalling the Almaty Declaration and the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries,[1]

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted on 8 September 2000,[2] in which Heads of State and Government recognized the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries and urged both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their particular development needs and to help them overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems,

Recalling the outcome of the 2005 World Summit,[3] in which the special needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries were reaffirmed along with reiterated commitments of the world leaders to urgently address those challenges by effectively implementing the Almaty Programme of Action,

Recalling also the Asunción Platform for the Doha Development Round,[4] adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries Responsible for Trade, held in Asunción on 10 August 2005, and the Ulaanbaatar Declaration, adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries Responsible for Trade, held in Ulaanbaatar on 28 and 29 August 2007,

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[1] *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28-29 August 2003* (A/CONF.202/3), annexes I and II.

[2] See resolution 55/2.

[3] See resolution 60/1.

[4] A/60/308, annex.

Recalling further the ministerial declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2007,[5] which called for the full, timely and effective achievement of the goals and targets of the Almaty Programme of Action to address the special needs of the landlocked developing countries,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 61/212 on the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action,

Have adopted the following communiqué:

1. We re-emphasize that the effective integration of landlocked developing countries into the global economy and timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved through genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners, as well as between public and private sectors, at the national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels and through full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

2. Landlocked developing countries are committed to continue implementing reforms addressing the given priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action while prioritizing the development of efficient transit transport systems within the national budget and overall economic development strategies. We are further dedicated to strengthening the commitment of national organizations for their full support and cooperation in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

3. We continue to attach the utmost importance to the effective cooperation and collaboration with our transit neighbours, since landlocked developing countries depend on their transit facilities for access to and from the sea. Landlocked developing countries are strongly committed to work in close cooperation and coordination with our transit neighbours in the search of practical solutions to addressing special needs of landlocked developing countries. The importance of South-South cooperation was further emphasized as transit transport cooperation squarely falls under its purview. In this context, regional economic groupings and transit agreements, as well as bilateral agreements, play a critical role in promoting transit transport cooperation. We are committed to the effective implementation of these agreements.

4. We urge our development partners to provide greater financial assistance on a priority basis in the development of transit transport facilities, including completion of missing links to connect landlocked developing countries with the regional network, and in undertaking far-reaching trade facilitation measures to improve the efficiency of the use of existing transit facilities. Such assistance should be provided urgently, mostly in the form of grants and concessional assistance. We also urge the international community to accord greater market access and preferential treatment to exports of landlocked developing countries in order to mitigate the high trade transaction costs caused by their geographical handicaps. Special consideration should also be given to landlocked developing countries in the context of the aid for trade initiative and the negotiations on trade facilitation at the World Trade Organization.

5. We recognize that climate change presents daunting challenges for the socio-economic development of the landlocked developing countries. Landlocked

[5] A/62/3, chap. III, sect. C.

developing countries are particularly prone to desertification, drought and increased incidence of extremes in weather. We agree to have a coordinated position to reflect their concerns at the forthcoming international forums, such as the next United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007.

6. We emphasize the importance of the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. It is an important exercise to review the progress made so far in implementing its various provisions, the constraints encountered and the lessons learned in the past five years, as well as how the second half of the implementation period could be effectively utilized to advance on the ultimate goals to assist landlocked developing countries. The international community should therefore give particular importance to the process and ensure active participation.

7. We fully support the road map prepared and being implemented by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in close cooperation with the relevant United Nations organizations, as the overall organizational strategy for the timely preparation for the midterm review. We endorse the outcome of the thematic meeting on transit transport infrastructure development, held from 18 to 20 June 2007 in Ouagadougou, and the outcome of the thematic meeting on trade and trade facilitation, held on 30 and 31 August 2007 in Ulaanbaatar.

8. We emphasize the importance of the regional reviews on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, to be held in the first half of 2008. The existing intergovernmental mechanism of the United Nations regional commissions should be effectively utilized for this purpose. We encourage the landlocked developing countries, the transit developing countries and their development partners, as well as the relevant regional and subregional organizations and the regional development banks to actively participate in the regional review meetings. The relevant regional commissions are requested to provide necessary preparations for these meetings in close cooperation and collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

9. We welcome the proposal made by the Government of Mongolia to set up an international think tank in Ulaanbaatar to enhance the analytical capability of landlocked developing countries, which is needed in order to maximize the efficiency of our coordinated efforts for the effective implementation of the internationally agreed provisions, particularly the Almaty Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, the landlocked developing countries urge the international organizations and donor countries to assist them in achieving this endeavour.

10. Landlocked developing countries are committed to taking an active role in the preparatory meetings leading to the midterm review in 2008. The Governments of landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and donor countries are invited to participate in the midterm review at a high political level. The midterm review should result in an action-oriented political commitment aimed at further galvanizing genuine partnerships among landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and their development partners, as well as public-private sector partnership at the global, regional, bilateral and national levels to

facilitate efforts of landlocked developing countries in their effective participation in the world economy and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals.

11. The midterm review should be organized for two days during the plenary meeting of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly at the ministerial level. High-level parallel events, round-table meetings, announcements of important initiatives, commercial deals, the conclusion of international instruments and the demonstration of the use of information technology and best practices in trade facilitation should be organized during the midterm review to raise its profile.

12. Organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations, particularly the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations regional commissions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), regional development banks, the World Customs Organization, the World Bank and other international and regional organizations should make tangible contributions to the effective preparation for and organization of the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action.

13. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in accordance with the mandate given it by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/212, is requested to continue to provide necessary preparations for the midterm review and to coordinate and mobilize system-wide efforts within the United Nations for the successful organization of the review.

14. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to undertake the necessary measures to provide the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States with the necessary resources to enable it to carry out its task related to the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action and other related mandates given by the General Assembly.